

# Baffin Youth Outdoor Education Project

2019 YOUTH CATEGORY  
\$100,000 WINNER



ARCTIC  
INSPIRATION PRIZE



PRIX INSPIRATION  
ARCTIQUE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

Nominator: Paul Crowley Vice-President, Arctic,  
WWF Canada

Team: Brittany Masson (Team Leader), Leetia Eegeesiak,  
Aasta Idlout, Jovan Simic

This report was compiled and created by the Qatalyst Research Group, with the help of Ilitaqsiniq, the project team, and AIP.



Photo credit: Kool Runnings

## KOOL RUNNINGS – A PROUD SUPPORTER OF BAFFIN YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Kool Runnings is an Arctic Adventure Outfitter based in Iqaluit that specializes in dog-powered adventures and is a proud supporter of youth programs in the Baffin Region (Nunavut), helping develop and run programs for young outdoor enthusiasts and aspiring guides.



<https://vimeo.com/407937092>

### Dog Sledding Adventures

- Day tours
- Baffin Island traverse
- Kimmirut adventure
- Custom expeditions

### Summer Adventures

- Akshayuk Pass Expedition
- Boating around Iqaluit
- Camping

### Youth Programs and Support

Encouraging young outdoor  
enthusiasts and aspiring guides.

## JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

Nine youth between the ages of 9 and 15 completed a voyage through canyons and over hills from Iqaluit to Kimmirut. The trip utilized two dog teams, and some youth made the trip from Iqaluit to Kimmirut and flew home, while others flew to Kimmirut and returned to Iqaluit via dog sled. Some youth did the entire nine-day trip from Iqaluit and back, including Leetia Egeesiak who did the trip on a sled she built at school with her friend Kayala Qamaniq, one of the other participants.



A group shot of the team travelling from Kimmirut to Iqaluit. Photo credit: Jovan Simic

“The best part was probably the air going in my face when they went fast.”

Jayko Kilabuk, 11

Read the **Nunatsiaq News** article here: [Youth recount 150 km dogsled trip to Kimmirut](https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/youth-recount-150-km-dogsled-trip-to-kimmirut/)

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## BUILDING TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Youth build traditional skills while spending time doing activities with Kool Runnings. On the two-week dog sledding trip, the team worked through blizzards and learned about navigation, shelter, ice fishing with nets, and seal hunting in the Cumberland Sound. Two youth boating trips, 3 and 5 days long, had 9 youth participants who were taught about boating, water safety, successfully harvesting seals for human consumption and for dog food, how to skin and butcher seals, and how to prepare skins to make clothing. Additionally, youth fished in the lakes by kayak and were taught how to rock climb.



Photos from Kool Runnings Facebook page.

## CULTURALLY-CENTRED WORKSHOPS

From October 2019 through April 2020, the team was able to hold various workshops and activities in Iqaluit, which included qamutiik building, whip making, parka making, seal skin mitt sewing, igloo building, youth dog sledding, and the youth Kimmirut trip.



Qamutiik Building Workshop with Jimmy Qaunirq (photos by Taha Tabish)



Traditional Dog Whip Making with Natalino Piugattuk

## IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND THE LOVE OF OUTDOORS

“For me if going through (a) hard time, when I’m dogsledding all the problems go away and I live in the moment... Hopefully we have done the same for youth, going into these programs if nothing else at the minimum provides them that escape from their situation... Everyone including some of the instructors I would say, as they are also living in that moment doing whatever they are doing, providing positive instruction.”

Jovan Simic



Jovan Simic, Instagram @jovan.koolrunnings

“Promoting youth to become confident, competent, and really resilient, especially when it comes to cultural knowledge.”

Brittany Masson, BYOE Ambassador

## EMPLOYMENT

5 youth have been employed with Kool Runnings since 2019.

## INVOLVEMENT IN FILMMAKING

Kool Runnings was able to secure movie contracts and hire youth as junior guides, and even actors. The company, as well as youth actors, doubles, and dog handlers also appeared in a TV mini series called The North Walker. More information for the show can be found here: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7660970/>

Chickweed Arts and Build Film, out of Winnipeg, have also released articles and web publications on working with Kool Runnings and youth involved in their programming. The article can be found here:

<https://www.chickweedarts.com/dir/filming-for-build-films/>

“The film is part of a series of short films about Indigenous health disparities in Canada, and featured local youth actors Makpa Otak and Leetia Egegiak. Leetia was dog musher for Kool Runnings Inc. of Iqaluit and in the film, her character is a good friend of Makpa, who walks and talks with her grandmother’s spirit, as she looks for guidance and encouragement.”

Chickweed Arts



## DEVELOPING YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Leetia Eegeesiak has been with Kool Runnings since its inception and became the first youth ambassador when she was 12 years old. Since then Leetia has honed her skills in many areas and has become an apprentice guide. Leetia is especially fond of the dogs and enjoys guiding dog sledding trips around Iqaluit.



Photo credit: koolrunnings.ca



YOUR HOME.  
YOUR LAND.  
YOUR DECISION.  
Nunavut Land  
Use Plan

Leetia Eegeesiak

[https://youtu.be/  
d-RUg48XdJ0](https://youtu.be/d-RUg48XdJ0)

## SHARING THE BEAUTY OF THE NORTH WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

In January 2024, the Kool Runnings team were excited to welcome Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to their programming while he was in the North discussing the historic Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement with Premier PJ Akeeagok. While in Nunavut, PM Trudeau and his son Hadrien enjoyed dogsledding, taking in the beauty of Nunavut, and spent time socializing with local residents in an igloo.

“Nunavut can take your breath away. There’s something special about this place, this land, and the people who live here. I remember finding that out when my dad brought me up north many years ago. He had an extraordinary love for this part of the world, which he passed on to me – and I wanted to share that with Hadrien, too. We’ll never forget this time or the history we were able to witness here.”

Justin Trudeau  
Facebook, January 19 2024



Photo from the public Facebook account of Justin Trudeau

## PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Kool Runnings has received funding from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and the Government of Nunavut Culture and Heritage fund to run additional youth programs. They are also working on securing funding for future youth camps through CanNor.

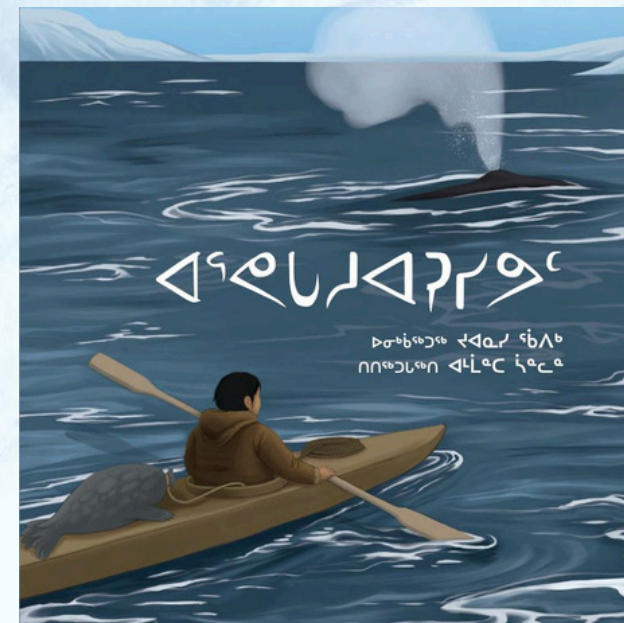
Local business Canadrill has helped Kool Runnings with donations of ice anchors for their dog teams, And Canadian North, an Inuit-owned airline, has provided sponsorship for Arctic Winter Games athletes.

Check out the language resources below from QIA.

View their entire catalogue here: <https://www.qia.ca/free-inuktitut-books/>



<https://nbes.ca/project/1113/>



<https://nbes.ca/project/how-we-hunt-a-bowhead-inuktitut/>



<https://nbes.ca/project/grandmother-ptarmigan-inuktitut/>



<https://nbes.ca/project/the-raven-and-the-loon-inuktitut/>